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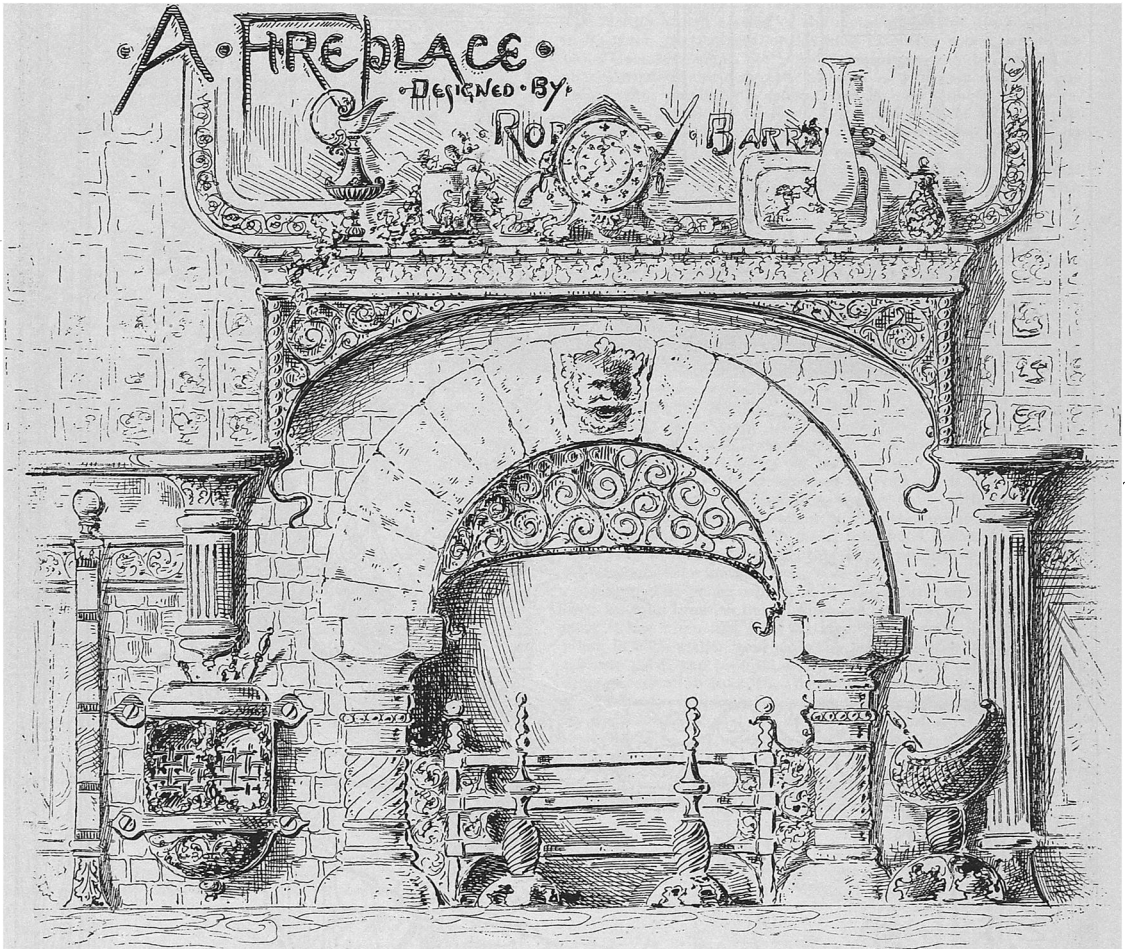
THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

A DECORATIVE ART MUSEUM.

THE suggestion of an exhibition of decorative arts has been made on more than one occasion in this magazine, and it is believed that the time has come when such an exhibit should be made; nay, more, that the time has come when it should be made comprehensive and permanent. When one reflects that there are dozens of little towns in Europe that have art treasures in public museums where they may be seen at all times and by all people, it makes our city of two millions appear but an undeveloped city after all. Considering the lack of visible impetus and inspiration for the decorative artist, our progress in ornament has been truly remarkable, and must be ascribed to a natural aptitude at least equal to that of any other people. To bring the best results from this aptitude, to familiarize the public with good forms of decorative art, to interest and inspirit beginners, and to kindle the spark in those who have been doomed

vided for the rich that they are not asked to share, an institution like this would prove art to be a democracy, with privileges that all might share, and would reveal many things of beauty that the poor could almost as readily own and enjoy as the rich.

William Morris—painter, weaver, decorator, poet and socialist—has said, "I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few, or liberty for a few," and Mr. Morris' view is right. Art thrives in a free atmosphere and it is of use to all people. At least as many great artists and useful artists have come from the ranks of the poor as have sprung from the circles of the wealthy, for the idea that palettes and brushes were hardly the implements to place in the soft hands of fortune is one that has not been wholly outgrown, but it is to reveal to themselves the talent, perhaps genius, that is latent in rich and poor together, that a museum of decorative art, planned as liberally as the great collections of Paris, London and Dresden, should be established in New York. We are old enough, big



to labor at uncongenial employments, simply because they have encountered nothing that has directed their minds toward their natural bent—to do all this we should have a display of decorative work in a convenient place, free of access, a possession of the city, and a nucleus for a grand museum in the future.

At present if the young man or young woman would learn anything of decorative art he must secure admission to a school, or study the designs in furniture, embroidery, laces, carpets, paper, metal work, pottery, porcelain, mosaics, frescoes, silverware and jewelry in factories and salesrooms, where the range and variety are apt to be restricted to what is in popular demand. A museum, containing applied ornament in every form, would be a treasury of suggestions and ideas, where the special student would receive stimulus and assistance; besides, in these times when the working classes are complaining—without much justice, it is true, but with evident sincerity—that progress is in a measure barred to them, and that esthetic enjoyments are pro-

enough, intelligent enough, and, goodness knows, rich enough to have such an one. Will not our painters, decorators, architects and wealthy patrons of the arts consider its feasibility?

NIELLO enameling is by far the best means of decorating the surfaces of many objects in a quiet and rich way, and merits particular notice as showing signs of revival. It is within the reach of all who desire to occupy themselves with art, and admits of the most elegant designs. What is required is that it shall be applied to a surface that admits of being incised, such as soft metal or wood. For this incising engravers' tools are used. The composition of niello consists of silver, copper, lead and sulphur, in any desired proportions, these being stirred with a charcoal stick whilst being melted. It is poured out on a slab and beaten into strips. The incised lines are then filled in with it simply by means of rubbing. It stands exposure to friction and wear.